

Evolving Municipal Video Services & Public Access

STOP!

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Acknowledgements

This report has benefitted greatly from the support and input by a wide range of professional contacts and friends.

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General Introduction and Overview

The following document outlines a fully integrated, emergent, strategic plan for the video communication needs of the City of Bloomington (CoB).

The scope of this project is to facilitate the creation of an adaptive strategy to support the evolving video communication needs of the City in the following areas:

- Internal/external communications such as the recording and telecast of committee meetings
- Public access television services, the local PEG and Public Media Ecosystem

The Objectives

The City of Bloomington finds itself in the unique position of both being a stakeholder/participant and major shaping force in the local PEG ecosystem. This creates an opportunity the CoB to lead innovation but also increases the burden of responsibility, necessitating a shared approach. The CoB will not be able to act in isolation to realize many of the potential positive outcomes envisaged in this report.

Combined with the unprecedented, fast-paced evolution of the media landscape and its sustaining/enabling technologies this places the emphasis firmly on agility, cooperation and continuous contextual awareness.

In this situation a conventional static strategy document would risk obsolescence quickly and potentially become an obstacle to progress.

Thus the strategic plan presented is emergent.

This report aims to help create positive conditions and structures that will sustain a healthy, diverse and relevant PEG ecosystem through and beyond 2015.

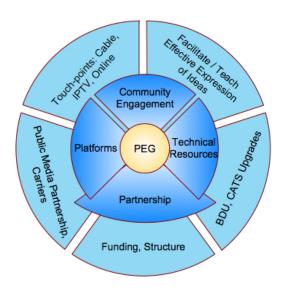


Figure 1 Local PEG Ecosystem

This document seeks to promote a common level of understanding among all stakeholders of the potential issues at hand. The text will cover the likely impact of various options available in a manner that is accessible to decision makers from diverse backgrounds with varying degrees of prior foundation knowledge.

The implicit aim is to ensure that municipal video communications and public access television will remain relevant to the local community against the backdrop of rapid digital innovation.

Part of this process is to enable the City as well as its main supplier of TV production and delivery services, "Community Access Television Services" (CATS), to generate maximum value from the funding at their disposal.

The two terms "value" and "integrated" warrant further definition to contextualize their use in this report.

In the context of public, educational and governmental (PEG) transmissions/communications "value" does not simply capture the amount and quality of program output per dollar spent. Value, for the purposes of this report also comprises intangible benefits to the community such as:

- Enhanced community interactions
- Promotion of cultural diversity
- Skill building of public producers
- Increased transparency of government
- Enhanced participation in the civic process

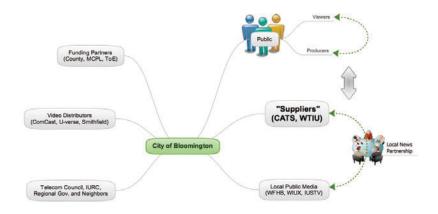


Figure 2 Stakeholders

The term "integrated" is used to describe an approach that will consider stakeholder interactions (see Figure 2) and address stakeholder needs with social, technical, operational and financial strategies where applicable.

This document is broken down into work streams (see Figure 3), which provide the overall context for each of the four sections.

The emergent nature of the overall strategy and the networks of contextual and stakeholder dependencies mean that there is some degree of overlap between the individual work streams. The order of their presentation within this document tries to reflect the interdependence between the streams by building the case and filling in related background information.

A complete sequential reading of this document is thus recommended to avoid misinterpretation of individual points that may otherwise arise from missing/skipped context.



Figure 3 Work Streams

The 4 Work Streams

A brief introduction of the four sections follows:

 Section 1 – Operations and Finance / Technology explores options for alternative funding methods and organizational/management structures for the main PEG operator CATS. It explores opportunities for improved brand

building and new ways to leverage the human capital available to CATS.

This section then proceeds with a detailed list of concrete actionable recommendations for both the CoB and its principal supplier of PEG related services, CATS. The recommendations are designed to leverage synergies in the relationship between the two organizations and improve technical and operational practices alike.

Given the pivotal importance of CATS as both the recorder and repository of local government meetings it is in the interest of the CoB to develop this supplier to its fullest potential. This section reflects this premise by devoting specific attention to the interdependences between the capabilities on both sides of this relationship.

 Section 2 – Audience and Users presents the results of a self-selecting online survey of PEG users. Due to the lack of random sampling and the resultant coverage issues of this survey it mainly serves as a general indicator of sample behavior and awareness among respondents. Time and financial constraints prevented a statistically representative study. In spite of these limitations the survey managed to unearth important insights, especially in the context of service portfolio awareness among this sample of PEG supporters.

A brief literature review, sampling articles and papers relevant to the PEG and public media context as well as audience behavior, is also included in this section.

 Section 3 – Partnerships provides an audit of existing partnerships relevant to the PEG activities of the CoB. This element seeks to provide an overview of the diverse portfolio of relationships, from video service providers to PEG operators and public media outlets, the CoB interacts with and depends on for its video services. The section provides a reference for the current status and presents potential opportunities for future partnership development. The recognition that people, and the communication and understanding among them, are crucial elements in carrying forward the successful implementing of the ideas in this document sits at the heart of this section. As such it proposes measures to enhance and build stakeholder interactions and communication, starting with a PEG summit hosted by the CoB.

Section 4 - New Services offers a scenario-based approach to future service expansion with a strong focus on online delivery and accessibility of PEG content. It contains educational elements, covering both the opportunities and infrastructure demands associated with future service expansion. These elements are deliberately written to be accessible for less technology-aware stakeholders looking for suggestions on how to increase audience engagement in the new media context.

Section 4 concludes with a description of how technological and interpersonal integration between the PEG and public media community could be leveraged to create an enhanced yet more resource efficient local news service. The latter is considered a key element in driving the evolution of the local PEG ecosystem.

Furthermore, this document seeks to promote the active development of skills among the public for the competent use of media as an effective tool for expression of ideas.

As stated previously, the implicit assumption is that by developing its suppliers, creating new touch-points with citizens and acting as a facilitator to encourage new initiatives the CoB and the local PEG ecosystem will benefit alike.

By providing insights, tools and recommendations from various angles this document seeks to empower interested parties to pursue these goals successfully.

Stages in the Evolution of PEG

Given that a detailed step-by-step linear/static implementation plan spanning the full five years is neither a feasible nor an effective way to develop the local PEG ecosystem, the best way to summarize and expose the interdependencies and prerequisites within the system seems through the definition of different evolutionary stages.

Figure 4 defines these stages through their overarching goals and then lists key strategies to support these goals.

While presented here in a discrete temporal fashion, it should be noted that there will be overlap between the various stages. Some elements and strategies may reach maturity before others and such asynchronous development does not necessarily represent a threat to overall success. Unfortunately an accurate visualization of these characteristics pushes far beyond the limitations imposed by static two-dimensional (print) presentation.

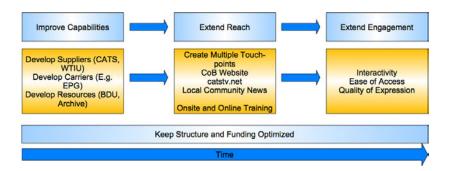


Figure 4 Implementation Phases of Strategic Plan

This plan was developed to help articulate a position and goals for the coming five years but does not define a static end state. Once the PEG ecosystem and the CoB's services have evolved within the overall societal context regular re-assessment, re-evaluation and ultimately new goal setting will be required to maintain the positive momentum.

The slower evolution of the media landscape and affiliated technologies of the past may have favored or tolerated longer, more static, planning

cycles and structures. However, looking forward, increasing competition for audience attention and strained government funding, combined with more direct competition for PEG in the domain of "public expression of free speech" (through online services), all necessitate a more agile stance for survival.

Ultimately it will depend on the initiative of all local actors/stakeholders involved whether the PEG ecosystem in Bloomington reaches its full potential. This plan simply aims to show a possible way to the future and provides a set of ideas and tools to help participants get *there*.

People, Process, Platform - Method Statement

The synergistic integration of these three components to create capabilities forms the foundation of all long-term projects described in this document. Technology, no matter how sophisticated or advanced, remains a dead asset when deployed without a clearly defined process framework. This document is intended to illuminate the processes and context within which any technology recommendations should be framed and deployed.

However, while the terms "framework" and "process" could be deemed to imply otherwise, platforms and processes are always shaped around the needs of the people empowered by them. The recommendations in this document have been compiled with the human being at the center of all reasoning.

Technology and the processes surrounding it are to conform to the people touched by it rather than the other way round.

This report has benefitted from a series of site visits and over 20 meetings with key stakeholders in Bloomington's PEG operations, public media and local government.

The survey section has greatly benefitted from the expert advice provided by Sara Laughlin, director of MCPL. Additional information about the survey process can be found in section 2.

Contemporary management theory and leadership practice inform the basis of the operational and marketing related recommendations. Please refer to the list of "Further Recommended Reading" at the end of the appendix for additional material on these subjects.

About the Author

Ralf Frieser is currently pursuing his MBA at the Kelley School of Business. He is triple majoring in "Entrepreneurship/Corporate Innovation", "General Management" and a design major in "Intellectual Property Law for Business".

He holds a master's degree in "Human Computer Interaction Design" from Indiana University's School of Informatics.

Furthermore, the author brings over 15 years of experience in the media and entertainment industry to this report.

He is knowledgeable in technology strategy and systems integration for the broadcast, postproduction and digital intermediate markets as well as IPTV head-end infrastructure.

He has worked for the British Broadcasting Corporation's in London and later ran his own consulting business with clients in Europe, Asia and the Americas.

Ralf Frieser has worked with CATS before as part of a course project during his master's degree in informatics.

His current resume is included in the appendix.

About the Appendix, Glossary and Definition of Acronyms

Please note a detailed list of acronyms and their definitions as well as a comprehensive glossary of domain specific terms relevant to this document is provided at the beginning of this appendix.

Readers not fully familiar with the subject domain or technologies involved may find these items particularly useful to make the material presented more accessible.

The rest of the appendix provides a range of reference materials either designed document issues raised in this document or to help support successive planning and implementation work.

A reading list of books relaying relevant business, design and technology concepts that have inspired the author's thinking for this report can be found at the end of the appendix.